(b) what is the cost of production in comparison with other countries; and

(c) what are the reasons for high cost of production in our country and what steps are being taken to reduce the cost of production?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NYAMAGOUDA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on Table of the House.

Srilankan charge against India for Aborting SAARC Summit

275. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY:
SHRI RANJIT SINGH:
SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the reported Srilankan accusation against India of sabotaging the SAARC summit meeting; and

(b) if so, what measures the Government of India have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Official Spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs has, through Press Statements of November 6, 7 and 13 given a full account of the stand taken by the Government of India. Propriety and principle require that Heads of State/ Government of all Member States should be enabled to participate in SAARC Summits. The very essense of SAARC Summit is decision by unanimity through personal consultations among the Heads of State/ Government. The suggestion to hold Summit meetings with representatives or substitutes would adversely affect the long-term and larger interests of SAARC.

Subsidies to Handloom Weavers

276. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of weavers of Delhi Pradesh Dalit Samaj surrendered "Charkhas" at the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi on 2nd October, 1991 in protest against Government's policy of previding subsidies to handloom weavers vis-a-vis their colleagues working in mills;

(b) whether it is a fact that the National Textile Corporation employ only one lakh workers in their mills while the handloom industries give employment to 15 lakh workers;

(c) whether it is also a fact that during 1988-89. Government granted only Rs. 35 crores as subsidy to handloom industry whereas Rs. 285 crore subsidy was given to National Textile Corporation Mills; and

(d) if so, whether there is any proposal with Government for the fresh reappraisal of the subsidy policy for the greater interest of a large number of handloom workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) Government is not aware of any such incident.

(b) The National Textile Corporation provides employment to about 1.70 lakh persons including officials. According to the National Handloom Census (1987-88), about 65.33 lakh persons are engaged in the preparatory and weaving activity in the handloom sector.

(c) No, Sir. During the year 1988-89 a sum of Rs. 27.80 crores was released to the National Textile Cor-